those relating to agriculture and TRIPS and Public Health. The consultative processes get further intensified in the run-up to the WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2005. At the WTO, the Government has been working closely with other like-minded countries, who share similar concerns and interests, to forge issue based coalitions, such as the G-20 on Agriculture and the G-33 on Special Products and Special Safeguard Mechanism. These alliances have also been closely coordinating positions with other developing country groupings.

**Indo-Japan bilateral trade**

976. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as a result of the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Japan to India, the prospects of Indo-Japan bilateral trade have improved;

(b) what is the extent of Japanese companies operating in India in 2005 and what its growth since 2001; and

(c) what is the action plan of both the countries to further strengthen their economic relations to contribute more to the development and prosperity of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. As a result of the visit of Prime Minister of Japan to India, the prospects of Indo-Japan bilateral trade are expected to improve.

(b) The number of Japanese companies operating in India is steadily increasing. Presently, more than 260 Japanese companies have invested in India.

(c) Steps being taken, on an on-going basis, to strengthen economic relations, include participation in trade fairs/exhibitions, exchange of delegations at both governmental and business levels, exchange of information, posing ODA loan package proposals to the Government of Japan, setting up of the India-Japan Joint Study Group, and the Japan-India Policy Dialogue, etc.